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Agenda item 27

SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Letter dated 19 February 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

Referring to agenda item 27 "Human rights situation in the territory of the former Yugoslavia", of the current session of the Commission on Human Rights, I have the honour to submit herein the statement of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs concerning the resolution to be adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

I would kindly ask you to have your office circulate the enclosed statement as an official document of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 27.

(Signed): Dr. Vladimir Pavicevic
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

GE.93-10936 (E)

Statement concerning the resolution to be adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights

1. The current session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has on its agenda an item on the violation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The proposed draft resolution is a continuation of a one-sided and partial campaign being conducted in this body against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serbian people as a whole. The text of the resolution, as proposed for adoption by the Commission, is full of political connotations and allegations whose possible implications, political and other, could be extremely harmful for the peace process going on at the Geneva Conference and lately within the Security Council as well.

2. Over a long period charges have been systematically levelled against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the entire Serbian people has been libelled in an unprecedented campaign. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is not paid tribute for the earnest efforts it is making within the framework of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia to promote an early peaceful and just settlement of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina which is in the vital interest of all, including the Serb community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rather than being commended for a number of steps which the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has undertaken in this context, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is indicated as being solely responsible for the situation in these areas. The allegations regarding the status of minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are far from being true. On the contrary, they deliberately distort facts in order to cause political instability in Yugoslavia.

3. Under its Constitution, Yugoslavia is a State of all citizens living within its borders and where other ethnic groups (Hungarians, Albanians and Muslims), accounting for about 30 per cent of the population, have equal rights as Serbian and Montenegrin citizens. Many of the co-sponsors of the Human Rights Commission resolution, including the former Yugoslav Republics, cannot pride themselves on such a constitution. Furthermore, the systematic, frantic and shameful campaign mounted in the world media has never before been seen; its only aim is to lay the groundwork for an international action against Yugoslavia of which the current action in the Human Rights Commission is but a part.

4. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that such an approach by the Commission on Human Rights does not contribute to the promotion either of respect for human rights, which is its principal task, or of the fundamental human rights standards laid down in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Charter of the United Nations, but rather compromises them. Using the Commission to achieve political ends is a degradation not only of the Commission but of its role in the preservation and observance of human rights throughout the world. Moreover, the adoption of this resolution and the whole political game around it are in themselves a classic example of violation of the fundamental human right of the Serbian people to exist and not to be discriminated against. To express a collective censure of an entire nation is to set a dangerous precedent for the future work and direction of the Commission.